

Piles of Paper, Simmering Streams and Relieving Pressure. by 7CuteCreationImagination7

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Summary:

Steve has many secrets. Some are more normal than others.

Five!Verse

Piles of Paper, Simmering Streams and Relieving Pressure.

Author's Note:

Hello!

Thank you very much, JinxxMarquette for the prompt. I hope this fulfils your expectations and I'm hoping you like it.

For everyone else reading this, I hope you like it too. You might have to read Five to understand it. Sorry.

Love you and God bless.

Steve knows that he still has secrets.

The Party think they know him. They know him better than anyone else.

They still do not know him entirely.

They know he is growing his hair out back to its chin-length-hairsprayed glory. They know he has nightmares. They know that the burns on his arms left permanent scars.

But what they don't know, is what makes him the combination of Steve, King Steve, Five and 005.

They don't know that his powers don't switch on and off at will like Kali and El's. The girls haven't told him that, no. But it is clear on their faces, because they both tense up their neck muscles, and clench their teeth, like they have to struggle to flick that mental switch.

Steve knows it. It feels like that when he has to manipulate force.

But the kids, and the adults also think that the rest of his powers work like that. His powers are different. Probably because his powers were one hundred percent intentional, not a freak accident like Eleven's, or developed over time, like Kali's.

However, Steve doesn't really think that his powers are what sets him apart. Sure, it sets him apart from the rest of the human population.

(That. That's been happening for a while now. He isn't quite sure what to think about it. He doesn't think that most people think of themselves as other than human. It freaks him out a bit)

His mind — not the powers— is what sets him apart. Information just stays there. He reads a funny book, watches a funny show, and he can regurgitate the quip or joke to Dustin, or Dylan or Peter, or whoever wants to be his friend right then, without having to think too hard.

And sometimes, he thinks of his brain as those police boards. Like, when he tried to understand physics, he didn't get it, until he had gathered a number of different facts and theories, and once he looks at them, seeing their links, Physics just made sense.

(Well. Physics made more sense. Physics didn't make sense to anyone. But, it made enough sense for him to get an astonishingly good grade.)

It sort of works like this. Light, light travelled in waves. Light was part of a group, a group of waves that were a mixture of an electric field and a magnetic field— electromagnetic spectrum. The electromagnetic spectrum was important, because its waves emitted ionising radiation —

It was like a flowing river, just that instead of water, information flowed freely, stumbling and rolling over rocks.

Steve knows that people are weird about people being smart, but not their type of smart. People, they liked the popular smart the good-grades-good-social skills-good fashion type of smart. They didn't like it if you were too smart, because it made them uncomfortable, because the competitive survival instinct would rise animalistically inside them, and they got frustrated.

Which was paradoxical. Because people also got angry and frustrated if you weren't smart enough for them. Like, there was a perfect ratio of smart to not smart that you had to fit to be good.

Anyway. Steve was smart, but he tried to hide it. He had hidden it, using sleep deprivation, beer and distractions to keep his brain occupied, so he would get passing, but not failing, grades.

Grades which would give the impression that he was trying hard, but the he was just not the academic type.

But, it turned out that, as his medication didn't do well with alcohol, and that he had no "friends" to distract him, it got increasingly harder to hide it.

He felt like he wanted to punch, maybe rip the soft fibre wool out of the school walls, anything to alleviate the oppressive boredom in his brain.

Obviously, he couldn't do that. So he slipped, mentally, and let himself write the answers he actually wanted to write on the test.

It had felt amazing. Like he had released the fog and darkness that was putting pressure on his brain when he had written down everything that he knew. The best metaphor he could think of was connecting a site to the almost-bursting water balloon.

So he continued doing it. Momentarily, not pretending, and just letting himself let the information into the paper, the blue ink like a strange sort of release for him.

Steve didn't think about it much. It was labelled as unimportant. It was in the box along with what he wore, and what his favourite foods, colours and music was. They were facts that most people cared about, but it didn't really mean much.

So, when everyone is over at his house, he thinks nothing of it when the postman arrives.

Hopper is smiling, his arm around Mrs Byers' waist, flirting gently as they make waffles for the group of sleepy teenagers in the dining room.

El's Eggos lie on the table, an impressive mound of whipped cream, gummy bears and maple syrup are piled on top. Mike's have a smiler look to them, but he appears to have swapped the whipped cream for

strawberries. Dustin's have chunks of nougat on top, and Will is munching on the bacon amusedly looking at his friends' sticky faces.

Nancy and Jonathan have just arrived from Nancy's house, and are watching TV.

It is peaceful, and he miraculously had no nightmares last night, so it is all well.

The letterbox opens and shuts with a swing of metal. The flap creaks, the un-oiled metal protesting as it moves on its hinges.

Steve looks at it. An advertisement for the persistent electricity company. A leaflet for the new diner in town. A letter from his mom. And a letter from Hawkins High School.

Steve takes his letter from his mom upstairs. It goes along with the medicines, the diagnoses, the letters from colleges, and everything that the Party doesn't need to see.

He leaves the letter from the high school downstairs. Steve assumed that it was bills, or something to that effect.

He also, stupidly, assumed that his friends/acquaintances/whatever they were (family) had a sense of decency, or understood privacy.

So when the still-tired teenager comes downstairs, his form stopped at the stairs, blinking at the dark fog of emotions which he couldn't decipher, could barely see through.

Purple, green, brown with flashes of orange congregate in his vision, the revolting mixture of colours almost physically painful to see.

Steve focuses, and the fog clears, to reveal an even more unsettling scene.

Everyone — and by everyone, he means everyone— is staring at a piece of paper on the table, bickering over each other.

The party, or, everyone under the age of fifteen, are all waving their hands at each other, Max's red hair flying around, Mike and Dustins' curls shaking, hands flapping in the air like they are imitating

flustered pigeons. Nancy and Jonathan are looking at Joyce, Hopper and El. They wear different expressions, expressions of confusion, betrayal, and bewilderment.

Steve steps over, and looks at the piece of paper, his heart sinking down, from his thorax, to his abdomen, to when it begins to burrow into his feet, gnawing at the ground as if it is trying to sink further down.

On a piece of paper, lay a few sentences, a set of remarks, a stamp. A set of letters.

A set of seven A*'s to be exact, along with a sidetone stating that, due to his contributions to the school this year, they are docking 25% of his fees.

One part of him is elated. It is nice to have his suspicions of his own intelligence confirmed, without having Brenner's malicious grin, or a scientist's greedy eyes reading his results without telling him.

The scholarship's also nice. It bodes well for his college letters, none of which he has answered.

Ah. People. Good people, but still, people.

All of which were staring at him with varying levels of emotion.

El speaks, and he's kind of happy that she's the one to break the silence. He adores his little sister's bluntness and constant truths. It is better than then pretty, sugar coated words of people.

" You aren't dumb. You're smart. Very Smart. Friend's don't lie!"

Oh. She was hurt. But this wasn't important to them, was it?

The pipe dream of going to college with Nancy had dissolved with their relationship, and it wasn't like the adults were his parents, so why were they all looking so upset?

On one level, he understood. Lies of omission were often worse than lies of deceit. But this was a white lie, like not telling them about the migraines, and Kali not telling them that he thought that the

explosion would kill him.

Hopper surprised him, grabbing him by the wool of his jumper, and then crushing him to his chest. It was a brief hug, but it was heartfelt, the soft, duck yellow of fondness wafting around him like an aura.

“ Congrats kid. i’m happy. I’m livid, but I’m happy.”

Mike had a different reaction:

“ Why the f...heck did you pretend to not be smart!? We could have had so many interesting conversations! I can’t believe— why?”

“ Smart people get punched. Stupid people get sneered at. Low Average people blend in the crowd.”

Dustin hopped in front of him, shaking the monotonous emotions and feelings that rose from reciting the lines that his trainer had forced him to memorise.

“Yeah. But you don’t need to do that now, duh. Does this mean that you’ll help us with the science experiments we have planned for this summer?”

Steve sighed, relief colouring his tanned features as El returned, rubbing her head on his sleeve like a cat, before being bombarded with details of experiments.

After an hour of convincing Lucas and Dustin that time-travel wasn’t possible, convincing Mike that “associated teaching” had already been invented, and then that Ivan Pavlov did exist, Steve smiled.

Sure, his house was empty, there were papers and books strewn around his lounge like an enormous collage. He had managed to exhaust his memory, his brain too tired to block out his own fog of emotions, like it normally did.

But it was good.

Yes, he thought, looking at the results to his university applications, observing the positive answers, yes.

Being not-quite-human was alright. Having a different brain to his fellow human was pretty sweet.

One less secret lay on his heart as he went to bed that night, his arm wrapped around a pillow as he slipped off into a dreamless sleep.